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DE RUEHKO #4570/01 2740158

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P 010158Z OCT 07

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8083

INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY

RULSDMK/USDOT WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//

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RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA

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RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 5851

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 17 TOKYO 004570

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TREASURY/OASIA/IMI/JAPAN; DEPT PASS USTR/PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;  
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FAS/ITP FOR SCHROETER; PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR;  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 10/01/07

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Burma

Articles:

1) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, September 28

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 29, 2007

09:01

Attended a cabinet meeting at Kantei. Afterwards, telephoned Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, and then, met with Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura, and after him, met with Minister of Economy, Trade & Industry Amari.

11:00

Telephoned South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun.

13:32

Met with Cabinet Intelligence Director Mitani.

14:26

Met with Chair Sugiura of the LDP Research Commission on Expanding the Size of Regional Divisions and others.

15:09

Met with Foreign Policy Bureau Director-General Kawai and Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau Director-General Okuda of the Foreign Ministry. Later, met with Health Minister Masuzoe.

17:03

Gave a speech at the Kyodo Press Building at Higashi Shinbashi.

19:22

Dined with his secretaries and others at the Chinese restaurant at Hotel Okura.

21:28

Arrived at his private residence in Nozawa.

Prime Minister's schedule, September 29

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 30, 2007

Stayed at his private residence in Nozawa.

Prime Minister's schedule, September 30

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
October 1, 2007

09:17

Attended a special cabinet meeting at Kantei.

10:00

Made an inspection tour of Kantei before moving in.

11:58

Arrived at his private residence in Nozawa.

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15:30

ad talks with editorial members of press companies.

16:06

Had talks with editorial members of TV broadcasting companies.  
Later, had a press briefing with reporters in charge of Cabinet.

17:39

Met the Emperor and the Empress at Haneda Airport, who have just  
come home.

18:38 Arrived at his private residence in Nozawa.

2-1) Poll: Fukuda cabinet's support rate at 55.3 PERCENT

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)  
September 29, 2007

The rate of public support for Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's cabinet, which was inaugurated Sept. 26, was 55.3 PERCENT, the Sankei Shimbun found from its joint public opinion survey conducted with Fuji News Network (FNN). The nonsupport rate for the Fukuda cabinet was 28.7 PERCENT. The Fukuda cabinet's approval rating upon its inauguration marked the sixth highest level since Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's cabinet with the start of coalition government, following the cabinets of Hosokawa, Junichiro Koizumi, Shinzo Abe, Tsutomu Hata, and Ryutaro Hashimoto.

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Respondents were also asked how long they thought the Fukuda cabinet would continue. In response to this question, 52.9 PERCENT answered "until around the next election for the House of Representatives." Respondents were further asked when they thought the next House of Representatives election should be carried out. To this question, 38.5 PERCENT said the election should be held "during the first half of next year," topping all other answers. As seen from these figures, many people seem to think the Fukuda cabinet is to manage the election and will not last long. In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stood at 33.9 PERCENT, up 3.4 percentage points from the last survey taken Sept. 15-16. The leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) was at 28.1 PERCENT.

2-2) Poll: More than half support continuing MSDF refueling mission

SANKEI (Page 1) (Abridged)  
September 29, 2007

In the joint poll conducted by the Sankei Shimbun and Fuji News Network (FNN) this time, 51.0 PERCENT supported continuing the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. Those against it accounted for 39.7 PERCENT.

The proportion of affirmative answers increased 2.3 percentage points from the last survey conducted Sept. 15-16. The United Nations Security Council has now adopted a resolution expressing its gratitude to Japan and other countries participating in antiterror mop-up operations. Meanwhile, the ambassadors to Japan of 11 countries, including the United States, have also released a statement calling on Japan to continue the MSDF's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The public understanding of the MSDF's refueling activities seemed to have deepened with the international

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community's growing expectations for Japan.

Asked about the survey results, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda commented yesterday: "I think the (public) understanding has been gradually deepening. However, we must not be overconfident in the figures. I'd like to continue to talk about this matter in a careful manner so that many people can feel reassured."

3) New antiterror law for fuel, water supply only

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Abridged)  
October 1, 2007

The government will present a new antiterror legislative measure to the Diet during its extraordinary session in order for Japan to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. The new antiterror legislation, according to its outline revealed yesterday, specifies United Nations Security Council Resolution 1776, which was adopted in September and expressed appreciation for maritime interdiction operations involving the MSDF. In addition, the bill stresses that the international community appreciates the MSDF's role. The Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, currently in effect for the MSDF's activities in the Indian Ocean and due to expire on Nov. 1, requires the government to ask the Diet for its approval of plans to send the Self-Defense Forces. The bill does not stipulate this requirement. Instead, it will incorporate activities and areas that were incorporated in the government's masterplan for the MSDF, thereby ensuring civilian control.

The government will hold a meeting of cabinet ministers tomorrow to adopt the new legislation's outline, and the government will also present it to the ruling parties' project team tomorrow. The newly planned law is to specify the UNSC resolution in its purpose. In addition, it will also say the MSDF's activities contribute to the international community's assistance with Afghanistan's reconstruction.

The new legislation limits the MSDF's activities to oil and water supply. The current antiterror law stipulates search and rescue operations as well as disaster relief operations. The new legislation will not incorporate these operations. The scope of MSDF activities is the Indian Ocean, including the Persian Gulf. The government and the ruling coalition will coordinate to set the newly planned law's validity at a period of one year from Nov. 2, the day after the current antiterror law expires.

4) Prime Minister Fukuda does not rule out extension of Diet session, will seek prior consultations on legislation with DPJ

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Excerpt)  
September 29, 2007

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, at a speech at Kyodo News Service on Sept. 28, expressed his view that he would call for consultations with the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) on the contents of bills prior to their being presented. The DPJ is the largest party in the Upper House. He said: "When we consider that from now on there is the possibility of bills being rejected in the Upper House, we should discuss the contents with the DPJ prior to presenting the bill." Regarding the new law to continue refueling activities in the Indian Ocean, he said: "We are now considering the

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contents, but it will take a little more time before we present it to the cabinet for approval." He also indicated that in his view there would be a need to extend the current Diet session, which ends on Nov. 10.

5) DPJ decides not to respond to ruling camp's call for prior consultations on new legislation aimed to extend MSDF refueling mission

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 29, 2007

In an executive meeting of its foreign and defense departments yesterday, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) decided to decline an offer by the government and the ruling camp to hold prior consultations on new legislation designed to extend the Maritime-Self Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean until detailed information of the actual state of MSDF operations is disclosed. The main opposition party will relay this decision directly to Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura today.

On the new legislation that is being worked out by the government and the ruling camp, Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama also made this remark in a press conference yesterday: "We should not easily respond to an idea of holding consultations when an outline is compiled."

The DPJ has decided to dispatch its own delegation to Afghanistan next week in preparation for laying out its counterproposal.

6) Defense Ministry apologizes for correction of amount of fuel provided

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
Evening, September 29, 2007

Referring to the correction the Defense Ministry has made to the amount of fuel the Maritime Self-Defense Force provided to a US vessel in the Indian Ocean in Feb. 2003, Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba during a Sept. 29 TBS program offered an apology, saying, "The mistake occurred due to a data entry error. I apologize for making a reply that was different from the facts." He then stressed, "It is important to disclose information. We will properly probe into why the mistake was made and release the finding."

When he was the director general of the Defense Agency at the time, Ishiba replied, "The amount of fuel provided was approximately 200,000 gallons, which is equivalent to the amount an aircraft carrier consumes in a day." Following the point made by a civic group, the defense ministry corrected the amount of fuel supplied to 800,000 gallons.

Keiichiro Asao of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), defense minister of the Next Cabinet, pointed out, "Assistance for operations in internal regions of Afghanistan should be carried out not in the ocean but in internal regions."

7) US forces receiving fueling assistance from SDF engaged in both Afghan air strikes and Iraq war; deviation of purpose of Anti-terrorism Special Measures Law

AKAHATA (Page 3) (Full)

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September 28, 2007

Diet debate on the supplying of fuel by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) in the Indian Ocean will start in October. The government and ruling parties intend to present a new refueling bill, which is described under the coalition agreement of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the New Komeito as, "cooperating with the international community and continuing the war on terror. However, the activities of the MSDF did not stop at supporting the retaliatory war against Afghanistan, which is unconnected with the

war on terror, they also included support for military operations that were deviations from even the anti-terror law, such as the Iraq war.

Based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, which was enacted in Oct. 2001, a unit of the MSDF dispatched to the Indian Ocean started in Dec. that year supplying oil on the high seas to US warships. The government explained that the MSDF unit would assist by refueling warships of every country participating in Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) to block terrorist forces in Afghanistan from moving through the waters of the Indian Ocean.

However, when the highest volume of fuel was being provided between Dec. 2001 and the end of 2002, the US forces were staging air strikes on Afghanistan from the Indian Ocean. And in Sept. 2006, as well, air strikes on Afghanistan were resumed by AV8B Harriers launched from the assault landing craft, the USS Iwo Jima. The MSDF's activities supported a retaliatory war that killed many civilians in Afghanistan.

Auxiliary duty became normal situation

After 2003, the US warships operating in the Indian Ocean, in addition to engaging in the anti-terrorist campaign known as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), held the additional duty of surveillance operations in the southern part of Iraq (Southern Watch), which took precedent. The US Navy has revealed that on Feb. 25, 2003, the supply ship Tokiwa provided fuel to the US carrier Kitty Hawk and other vessels. At the time, the Kitty Hawk and its fleet formed the leading unit in the Iraq war. According to US Navy documents obtained by the civic group Peace Depot, the role of the Kitty Hawk at the time was limited to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), for the documents did not mention OEF.

According to the US Navy's website, on Feb. 25, 2003, when the Tokiwa provided the Kitty Hawk with fuel, the carrier's main duty was Southern Watch. The fuel provided to it thus was diverted completely away from the purpose set for it under the anti-terror law. Even after 2004, when there was a pause in large-scale air strikes on Iraq, the auxiliary role of US warships (in the Indian Ocean) became the regular one.

According to the Navy's home page, the role of US warships being provided with fuel by the MSDF, in addition to Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) (in the Indian Ocean), was also OEF and OIF.

What was especially noticeable among the MSDF activities was the supplying of fuel to landing crafts. The main duty of landing crafts was to transport US Marines from a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) so that they could carry out mop-up operations in Iraq. Landing crafts carried out MIO and OEF in tandem with their transporting MEU troops.

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The duties of US warships in the Indian Ocean went beyond operations against Afghanistan and Iraq. There were also many divergences, including humanitarian assistance and drills with other foreign military units. However, after the MSDF provided fuel, what did those ships do? There has never been a probe into that issue.

8) MSDF's Indian Ocean refueling: 55 PERCENT indirectly supplied via supply ships

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Abridged)  
September 29, 2007

The Defense Ministry yesterday made public details of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities that have been carried out in the Indian Ocean over the past six years for foreign naval vessels, including aircraft carriers, under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. The MSDF's fuel supply to supply ships accounted for about 55 PERCENT of its total refueling. The current antiterror law stipulates that the MSDF's refueling is only for the war on terror in Afghanistan and its periphery. The Defense Ministry is now looking into whether those supply ships refueled vessels

participating in the Iraq war.

Supply ships receive fuel supply and refuel other vessels, including destroyers. In the case of indirect refueling via foreign supply ships, it is difficult to find out or identify refueled vessels. In the Diet, the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) has raised a question about this. According to the Defense Ministry's International Cooperation Division, the MSDF carried out 777 refueling services from fiscal 2001 through the end of August this year, and its fuel supplies during that period totaled 484,000 kiloliters, including 105 fuel services and 267,000 kiloliters for supply ships. The MSDF's fuel supplies to supply ships accounted for about 82 PERCENT of its total refueling until fiscal 2002. However, the Iraq war started after that. Meanwhile, the MSDF's refueling of foreign naval vessels was taken up in the Diet as a problem in fiscal 2003. After that, the MSDF's refueling sharply decreased to 15 PERCENT .

9) Focus in Diet session likely on allegations of Japanese fuel used in Iraq war; Uncertainty looming over new legislation

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
September 29, 2007

In the extraordinary Diet session to resume next month, the focus of discussion is likely to be on allegations that fuel provided by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) to US warships in the Indian Ocean could have been used in the Iraq war. Although the government plans to compile an outline for new legislation and hopes to launch a discussion with the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in an effort to extend the MSDF refueling operation, things may not proceed smoothly as it expects as long as the suspicion persists.

Peace Depot, a non-profit organization (NPO), pointed out the suspicion first. According to this organization, official US documents it obtained showed that a US fleet replenishment vessel refueled by the MSDF had provided the oil from the MSDF to a US aircraft carrier that was preparing to participate in the monitoring operation in Iraq in February 2003, just before the Iraq war began.

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Then Defense Agency Director General Shigeru Ishiba (now defense minister) said in a Diet reply that the amount of fuel the MSDF provided at that time was 200,000 gallons, but the Defense Ministry corrected the amount into 800,000 gallons after Peace Depot's announcement. Data released yesterday also revealed that the year when the MSDF refueling operation was most active was the year before the Iraq war was launched.

The Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, the basis of the MSDF refueling mission, specifies that the purpose of the refueling operation is to prevent and eradicate international terrorism, so the Iraq war is not endorsed by this law.

Defense Minister Ishiba said in a press conference yesterday: "We would like to disclose information (on the actual state of oil used for unintended purposes) upon obtaining approval from countries concerned and except for classified information." But due to the difficult process of obtaining approval from countries concerned, it is uncertain whether the investigation will produce effective results.

In this connection, DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama stressed in a press conference yesterday that the main opposition party would thoroughly pursue the allegations in Diet interpellations and on other occasions. He also indicated that the party would not easily respond to a request (by the ruling camp) for consultations on new legislation, saying: "We will make a judgment on the propriety of new legislation through a (Diet) committee."

10) DPJ to dispatch fact-finding team to Afghanistan

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
September 29, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Yuko Hatoyama revealed at a press conference on Sept. 28 a plan to send a fact-finding team of lawmakers to Afghanistan in early October to compile alternative measures to the continued Maritime Self-Defense refueling operations in the Indian Ocean. He stated: "We would like to visit Afghanistan as early as possible to gather information."

Asked about when the DPJ would display its own proposal, Hatoyama responded: "I think at least 2 weeks would be necessary before we compile it." He indicated the outlook that his party would be able to come up with the counterproposal in mid-October at the earliest.

11) Komura in UN address vows efforts for continued MSDF refueling operations

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Abridged slightly)  
Evening, September 29, 2007

Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura addressed the UN General Assembly in New York on the night of Sept. 28 (on the morning of Sept. 29, Japan time). Touching on the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operations in the Indian Ocean, Komura indicated that Japan would make legislative efforts for the continuation of the MSDF operations as a responsible member of the international community.

In addition, touching on the fact that Japanese photojournalist Kenji Nagai was shot to death in Burma, the foreign minister said: "It is extremely regrettable that many people, including a Japanese

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national, were killed or injured in the violent crackdown on demonstrators."

Komura also highlighted the need to increase the numbers of permanent and nonpermanent seats on the UN Security Council, saying, "Faced with diversified threats to international peace and security, the United Nations is expected to play a greater role than ever." He also asked for the cooperation of the member countries in order to produce concrete results during the current session of the General Assembly through next September.

12) Foreign Minister Komura in UN speech stresses need to reform UNSC

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
Evening, September 29, 2007

New York, Hiroyuki Nakamae

Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura made a speech during a general session of the UN Assembly on the evening of Sept. 28 (morning of Sept. 29, Japan time). In the speech, he underscored the need to reform the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and sought cooperation from member nations so that concrete results can be produced during the current assembly (until next September). He also expressed Japan's resolve to settle past accounts, including the abduction issue involving North Korea and Japan's colonial rule.

Regarding the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF)'s refueling operations in the Indian Ocean for assistance to Afghanistan, Komura indicated Japan's intention to continue the operations. Former Prime Minister Abe was originally slated to make a speech in the general session. However, following Abe's sudden resignation, newly-appointed Foreign Minister Komura made a speech instead.

Regarding reform of the UNSC, Komura noted that Japan would aim at increasing both permanent and non-permanent seats, which is its policy from before. He urged member nations to come up with draft proposals for a resolution to reform the UNSC and enter intergovernmental talks in a concrete manner.

Discussions to reform the UNSC are ongoing at the UN. However, talks have come to an impasse without concrete proposals. Behind Komura's speech is a sense of urgency that if no progress is made during the current session, it would be even more difficult to expect progress in the next session because of the US presidential election.

Regarding assistance to Afghanistan, he referred to the UNSC resolution adopted last week, which expressed appreciation for the maritime interdiction operations by multinational forces, including the MSDF refueling operations. He welcomed the adoption of the resolution and said, "We will make efforts for the continuation of the operations."

Touching on such issues as climate change and assistance to Africa, which came into focus during the current assembly, too, Komura underscored that they are areas on which Japan and the UN can cooperate.

Regarding the abduction of Japanese by North Korea, he said, "It is essential for the international community to send a strong message seeking a settlement of the issue as soon as possible." However, concerning that nation's nuclear issue, Komura simply stated, "Japan

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will continue its efforts to realize the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the six-party talks."

13) Japan unhappy with tentative six-party deal specifying limited number of disablement facilities; Gap with US evident

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)  
October 1, 2007

Satoru Ogawa, Beijing

Negotiators from six countries reached a tentative deal Sunday on steps toward North Korea's denuclearization and declaration of its nuclear programs to be taken by the end of the year. The Japanese government has positively evaluated it, as seen in Foreign Ministry Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau chief Kenichiro Sasae's comment that it would further advance the denuclearization trend. Further, a deadline for removing North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism has not been set, reflecting Japan's standpoint. But Japan is unhappy with the fact that only a limited number of facilities have become subject to disablement.

At the same time, a difference in views between Japan and the United States has also become, with the latter pointing to delisting North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism with the aim of prodding the North into implementing denuclearization steps before year's end.

A Japanese government source indicated on Sept. 30 that the tentative agreement was only a step toward the second phase composed of nuclear disablement and the declaration of nuclear programs, saying: "Although up to 30 PERCENT of the roadmap has been drawn up, the path beyond that must be determined through additional talks."

In the six-party talks, Japan demanded the full declaration of nuclear programs and the disablement of all nuclear facilities be mentioned in the roadmap to the second phase. Japan's demand came from the judgment that disabling all nuclear facilities beyond the three in Yongbyon was necessary for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

In the talks on Sept. 28, Sasae underlined the need to fully implement the (six-party) agreement reached in February without setting a deadline at year's end. This was intended to warn the United States not to make compromises to the North and remove it from the list of state sponsors of terrorism for the sake of implementation by the end of the year.

14) Japan to extend N. Korea sanctions out of need for continued pressure to resolve abduction issue

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
October 1, 2007

The government decided yesterday to extend its economic sanctions on North Korea for another six months, given that there has been no progress on the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea. This policy will be officially adopted by a cabinet meeting to be

held soon. The sanctions include measures to prohibit North Korean vessels from entering Japanese ports and the North from exporting any items to Japan. The sanctions were initially imposed in October last year in reaction to North Korea's nuclear test. This April, the

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government extended the sanctions by six months to mid-October.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura told reporters in Tokyo yesterday: "Since there has been no progress on the abduction issue, we are not in a situation in which we would decide to stop (the sanctions)." In reference to the Japan-North Korea working group session on bilateral normalization held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in September, Machimura said: "Although the atmosphere was favorable, there was no substantive progress."

Hearing Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda emphasizing the need for "dialogue," some pointed out his difference policy stance from the tough posture of the former Abe administration. But North Korea has yet to make a sincere response on the abduction issue, so the current government also has judged it necessary to continue to apply pressure on the North.

15) Japan feels sense of accomplishment in talks with North Korea owing to new dialogue-oriented policy, but extension of sanctions may draw fire from Pyongyang

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)  
October 1, 2007

Through its talks with North Korea as part of the latest six-party talks, the Japanese government has felt a certain level of sense of accomplishment in the North's responses to the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by the North and other issues. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's dialogue-oriented policy has apparently prompted the North react positively about improving relations with Japan. Nevertheless, Tokyo's decision to keep its economic sanctions against the North in place is certain to draw fire from Pyongyang. Striking a balance between dialogue and pressure will be a major challenge for the Fukuda administration.

Japanese chief delegate and Foreign Ministry Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau chief Kenichiro Sasae yesterday revealed this view to reporters regarding the Japan-DPRK talks: "Although there was some difficulty, a basic agreement was reached on continuing discussing matters of common interest of the abduction issue and the settlement of past accounts through closer talks."

In the latest multilateral talks, Sasae held a direct meeting with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye Gwan only once for just 45 minutes on Sept. 28.

But Kim is not in charge of normalization talks with Japan, so substantial talks were not held on the abduction issue and other matters.

Despite that, Japan has highly rated the North's response mainly because Kim in the Sept. 27 plenary session expressed the North's willingness to "make efforts to improve relations with Japan."

The abduction issue and other bilateral matters will be discussed by the Japan-DRPK working group. Japan failed to nail down a specific date for the next meeting for the working group through the six-party talks.

At the same time, there still remains concern that the United States might remove the North from its list of state sponsors of terrorism even if the abduction issue is not settled. Song Il Ho, North Korean

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ambassador in charge of diplomatic normalization talks with Japan in the bilateral working group, warned in the past that Japan's decision to continue its economic sanctions against the North would have an irreversible ill effect on the talks.

Although Tokyo's decision to keep its economic sanctions against the North in place might again stall bilateral talks that seemed to have taken a step forward with Japan's new dialogue-oriented policy, reducing pressure on the North is unlikely to win public support.

Prime Minister Fukuda has declared that he would settle the abduction issue. But his administration has already found it policy toward North Korea creating difficulties.

16) Prime Minister Fukuda likely to visit China in January, US after extra Diet session

SANKEI (Top Play) (Full)  
October 1, 2007

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda is now coordinating with Chinese President Hu Jintao a plan to hold their meeting in early January, it was learned yesterday. Fukuda is also considering a visit to the United States before the end of the year after the current extraordinary Diet session closes. He aims to build cooperative relations with China in order to resolve the pending issue of China's gas exploration in the East China Sea, as well as North Korea's nuclear and abduction issues, by strengthening bilateral ties, while placing importance on Japan-US relations. This was revealed by government sources.

Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe revealed in the Japan-China summit in April his plan to go to China in this year. In his telephone conversation with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao soon after assuming office, Fukuda expressed his willingness to visit China at an early date. Wen also requested on Sept. 27 former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, who was visiting Beijing, for an early visit to China by Fukuda.

However, the Japanese government had to set Fukuda's trip to China for early next year because it expected that the Diet schedule would not allow Fukuda to leave Japan since a debate on a new bill to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean is expected to encounter difficulties.

Tokyo and Beijing had agreed to compile a joint plan to develop gas fields in the East China Sea, but coordination has been stalled. The two countries appear to be hoping to demonstrate friendly relations at a time when Fukuda visits China, resolving the gas exploration issue by that time. Therefore, Tokyo and Beijing seem to have determined that there was not much time if Fukuda visited China this year.

Meanwhile, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa is planning to visit China in December. A source familiar with the Foreign Ministry said, "The prime minister aims to achieve diplomatic results bigger than those of Ozawa" by going to China after Ozawa.

A senior Foreign Ministry official said: "The purpose of Fukuda's plan to visit Washington before Beijing is to play up his stance of attaching emphasis to relations with the US" since his foreign

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policy is regarded as being tilted to China. With an eye on a temporary suspension of the MSDF refueling mission after the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law expires on Nov. 1, Fukuda intends to convey the Japanese government's policy of continuing its contribution to the international community.

17) Prime Minister Fukuda will deliver general-policy speech today, set stage for Diet debate after lapse of three weeks

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)  
October 1, 2007

Shinichiro Nishida

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda will today deliver a general-policy speech at a full session of both the chambers of the Diet, setting

the stage for debate in the Diet, which has been in effect in "spontaneous recess" for about three weeks in the wake of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's abrupt announcement of his resignation.

The positions in the Upper House between the ruling and opposition blocs were reversed as a result of the latest Upper House election, and expectations had been building over Diet debate on such issues as the pension fiasco and social disparities, but no debate has been held so far for two months since the election. The extraordinary Diet session was convened on Sept. 10, but soon after the opening of the session, it in effect went into recess owing to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) presidential election. Given that the current Diet session is to end on Nov. 10, there are only 41 days before the Diet closes. The expiration date of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law on Nov. 1 is also approaching.

The government will submit a new bill intended to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, but the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) still remains in the same stand of calling for withdrawing the MSDF.

On the "politics-and-money" issue, the LDP intends to put on hold a measure for disclosing all receipts of expenses, failing to act in concert with its junior coalition partner New Komeito, which has called for disclosure of all receipts.

Meanwhile, the DPJ, by making good use of the reversal of the positions between the ruling and opposition blocs in the Upper House, intends to pass a bill aimed at compensating for each farmer's income and a bill for creating a child allowance system to pay 26,000 yen monthly in the Upper House and differentiate itself from the ruling bloc and create a move for a dissolution of the Lower House. On the "politics-and-money" issue, as well, the DPJ intends to pass a bill revising (the Political Funds Control Law) so as to obligate lawmakers to attach receipts of every expense amounting to one yen or more (excluding the personnel expenses) in the Upper House and rock the ruling parties.

18) LDP branch headed by prime minister received improper donations worth 2.1 million yen during Lower House election campaigns from two companies with contractual relationship with state

ASAHI (Page 39) (Full)  
September 29, 2007

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The Asahi Shimbun has learned that the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Gunma Constituency No. 4 branch headed by Prime Minister Fukuda (elected from the Lower House Gunma Constituency No. 4) received donations totaling 2.1 million yen from a cleaning company and a construction company -- both are contractors for stated-sponsored public works located in Gunma Prefecture -- on or around the days Lower House elections were officially announced in 2003 and 2005. The Public Offices Election Law bans companies that have a contractual relationship with the state from making donations in connection with national elections and candidates from receiving such donations.

In response to a question asked by this newspaper, Fukuda's office replied that it had confirmed that there was no possibility of those donations causing misunderstanding, and that the office has taken procedures to return the money to those companies. It also explained that it was difficult to confirm the details of businesses of the donor companies. According to the political fund report filed by the branch office, the cleaning company in Takasaki City donated 1 million yen on Oct. 27, 2003 and on Sept. 1, 2005 respectively. The construction company in Fujioka City donated 100,000 yen on Aug. 30, 2005. The Lower House election in 2003 was officially announced on Oct. 28 and the one in 2005 on August 30, 2005.

The cleaning company received orders for cleaning national highways in fiscal 2003 and fiscal 2005 for 130 million yen and 140 million yen respectively from the Land, Infrastructure and Transport Ministry. The construction company received an order worth

approximately 180 million yen from the same ministry for national highway repair work from March to November, 2005 for March.

19) Government, ruling bloc to compile supplementary budget bill on scale of 180 billion yen as a result of freezing increase in medical copayments

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
October 1, 2007

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) Policy Research Council Chairman Sadakazu Tanigaki noted on a TV-Asahi talk show yesterday that a supplementary budget bill for fiscal 2007 "may be compiled" in order to freeze the increase in medical copayments for the elderly. The government and the ruling coalition intend to shape the supplementary budget bill by the end of the month and put it forward in the Diet at the beginning of its ordinary session to be convened next year. The junior coalition partner New Komeito's Policy Research Council Chairman Tetsuo Saito, as well, echoed Tanigaki's view, noting, "That is one approach." Saito indicated that the scale of a supplementary budget is expected to be 180 billion yen or so.

A ceiling on budgetary requests for a fiscal 2008 budget determined in August under the Abe administration indicates squeezing the social welfare-related budget by 220 billion yen. An increase in copayments was slated for April 2008, but this increase will now be frozen. This means the increased portion will be paid from the national coffers. But, if the national coffers' burden in this regard is carried over to fiscal 2008, the budget will exceed the budgetary request ceiling. So the government and the ruling parties have now decided to handle the increase portion in a supplementary budget for fiscal 2007.

20) DPJ to submit a storm of own bills to current Diet session

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aiming at tying up session and shaking the Fukuda government

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
October 1, 2007

The Diet will today resume its extraordinary session for the first time in three weeks with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's policy speech at the plenary sessions of its two chambers. The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) is geared up to go on the offensive to shake the government and ruling parties by submitting more than ten of its own bills to the current session. The DPJ aims to have the Upper House, which it now controls, pass its bills, which are drawn from pledges included in its manifesto for the July House of Councillors election. In this way, the largest opposition party plans to demonstrate its strong political presence to the public.

DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama in a speech yesterday in Mukawa Town, Hokkaido, referred to a bill to ban the use of pension premiums for other purposes than pension benefits:

"I think the bill will probably clear the Upper House. But it will not pass through the Lower House as is. However, there is an enough possibility that the bill will be enacted if you support our efforts."

Hatoyama stressed that his party would play up its efforts in deliberations at the Lower House after the measure clears the Upper House, while shaking the ruling coalition.

The DPJ initially planned to reduce the number of bills to be submitted to the ongoing session because it was concerned that it might be criticized for its insufficient preparations for fiscal sources to cover the costs of pension administration.

However, the party has now assumed the policy of submitting its own bills out of fear that the ruling coalition would get all the credits if bills are enacted through discussions between the ruling and opposition camps based on Prime Minister Fukuda's discussion-oriented policy. DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa instructed the members of the "Next Cabinet" on Sept. 26, saying, "I don't care

about details. I want you to present bills as quickly as possible."

21) Japan to demand punishment of Burmese soldier who shot and killed Japanese journalist amid civil demonstrations in Burma

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Excerpts)  
September 29, 2007

The government yesterday decided to demand that the military junta of Burma (Myanmar) probe into the death of the Japanese photo journalist, Kenji Nagai (50), after he was shot by security troops of the military junta who were firing on antigovernment protesters. The government will seek the punishment of the soldier who killed Nagai. This stance will be conveyed to the military regime by Deputy Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka, who arrives in Burma possibly today. If the Burmese government fails to respond fully to Japan's request, Tokyo may freeze economic cooperation, mainly in the area of humanitarian aid.

Late yesterday, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda told reporters he intended to strongly demand a full account of the incident: "I think it absolutely necessary for them to investigate the incident."

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Behind Fukuda's strong stance is the emerging proof that Nagai, who was covering antigovernment demonstrations, was shot by a soldier at point-blank range.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura gave an account of how the reporter had been killed at a press briefing yesterday: "The bullet entered into the lower part of his chest from the right side, passed through his heart, and exited from the left side of his back. We've received a report that he would have died instantly of massive blood loss." Foreign Minister Masakiyo Komura, who is now in the United States, told reporters: "There is the information that the reporter was deliberately shot to death."

If the reporter was intentionally killed, "Criticism will erupt among (the Japanese public). In addition, the incident raises questions about military law," a senior Foreign Ministry official noted. According to the information that came to the ministry soon after the occurrence of the incident, it was reported that Nagai was "shot by a stray bullet."

22) Japan may reconsider relations with Burma in wake of death of Japanese reporter

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
October 1, 2007

Masahisa Mikawa, Bangkok

In order to deal with the incident of the Japanese journalist, Kenji Nagai (50), having been shot to death at a time when he had been covering antigovernment demonstrators in Rangoon (Yangon), Burma, Deputy Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka (for Political Affairs) arrived in Burma yesterday evening. According to the Japanese Embassy in Rangoon, Yabunaka intends to lodge a strong protest with senior members of the Burmese military junta over the death of the Japanese reporter and suggest a comprehensive review of relations with Burma.

Yabunaka intends to stay in Rangoon one night and move today to the capital of Burma, Naypyidaw, and meet there with leaders of the military junta, including Deputy Foreign Minister Kyaw Thu. Yabunaka will demand a full account of how Nagai was shot and urge the military junta to immediately end the armed crackdown on civil demonstrations of citizens and monks.

Yabunaka also is expected to explain Japan's intention to reconsider its loan and grant aid to Burma in protest against the junta's use of force to oppress democratic forces.

23) Chief cabinet secretary says Japan will follow international agreement on sanctions against Burma (Myanmar)

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
October 1, 2007

Appearing on a Fuji-TV talk show yesterday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura spoke of the question of whether Japan would step up sanctions against Burma and again indicated a cautious view, saying: "China is an overwhelming aid-donor (to Burma). If we drive Myanmar into coming much closer to China, can we bring peace to Southeast Asia?" On the other hand, Machimura noted, "It is only natural for Japan to follow an international decision if it is

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made." Machimura thus indicated an intention to follow an international decision if it is made at the United Nations Security Council or at other international organizations.

DONOVAN